

# **LITHOGRAPHIC PROJECTION ASSEMBLY, SUBSTRATE HANDLING APPARATUS AND SUBSTRATE HANDLING METHOD**

## **ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to a lithographic projection assembly, comprising at least two load locks for transferring substrates between a first environment and a second environment, the second environment having a lower pressure than the first environment; a substrate handler comprising a handler chamber in which the second environment prevails; a lithographic projection apparatus comprising a projection chamber.

The handler chamber and the projection chamber communicate via, on the one hand, a load position for entering a substrate from the handler chamber into the projection chamber and, on the other hand, an unload position for removing a substrate from the projection chamber into the handler chamber. The handler chamber is being provided with: pre-processing means for pre-processing of the substrates; and transport means adapted for transferring substrates from the load locks to the pre-processing means and from the pre-processing means to the load position as well as for transferring substrates from the unload position to the load locks.